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SUBJECT: UN PEACEBUILDING COMMISSION - ECOSOC COMPONENT

Classified By: AMBASSADOR ALEJANDRO WOLFF, DEPUTY PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVE TO THE UNITED NATIONS, FOR REASONS 1.4(B)(D)

1.(C) SUMMARY: ECOSOC members met March 31 to discuss allocation of the seven ECOSOC seats on the Organizational Committee (OC) of the new UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). ECOSOC is close to finalizing a draft resolution that would allocate extra seats to Africa and Asia, without safeguards to keep this from becoming the norm. The resolution does, however, allocate one seat to WEOG, as well as to all other regional groups. USUN will try to push for an amendment that would clarify future seat distributions, per paragraph 4 below. END SUMMARY.

2.(SBU) ECOSOC members met March 31 to discuss how to allocate the seven seats ECOSOC will have on the Organizational Committee (OC) of the new UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). Nearly all members agreed in principle to granting each of the five regional groups one of the seven seats, and giving the two additional seats, for the purpose of the first election, to the Africa and Asia groups. USDel proposed electing the two additional representatives at large, based on post-conflict experience. This suggestion did not gain traction. India, Colombia and Nigeria expressed outright opposition, while sought to sidetrack the idea by simply adding additional references to the importance of post-conflict experience in the overall ECOSOC selection process. USDel stressed the importance of establishing a predictable selection system that enabled members at large to determine in at least two cases those countries that could contribute most fruitfully to the work of the PBC.

3.(SBU) Discussion of the distribution of seats was dominated by Asian and Latin American countries. Asia sought to protect their interests as the group with the largest membership by enshrining the principle of equitable geographic distribution. Latin America tried to leave the door open for annual reallocations that might result in more seats for the GRULAC countries than they will have initially. Africa stressed the importance of getting the PBC off the ground. All delegations agreed that the General Assembly's role in devising a mechanism to ensure an overall geographic balance was key, and that member states needed to see a draft GA resolution before final action could be taken in ECOSOC. Both Asian and Latin American countries questioned the allocation of a seat to WEOG. Guinea-Bissau's PermRep argued articulately for all geographic groups to always have an ECOSOC seat, removing the need for WEOG to make this case on its own behalf. Belgium praised the draft formula as a good short-term compromise.

4.(C) Draft ECOSOC resolution E/2006/L.2, which lays out the distribution scheme, does not provide any future mechanism for allocating the two additional seats nor any mention of a review of the distribution. ECOSOC President Hachani is

determined to move forward with his draft, despite the concerns raised by various delegations, and backed away from the idea of holding informal consultations on possible amendments. At a minimum, USUN intends to seek to insert a new paragraph clarifying that this decision does not set a precedent for future allocation of the two additional seats.

5.(SBU) GA President Eliasson has circulated a non-paper proposing the allocating the seven GA seats as follows for the initial composition of the Organizing Committee, to be reviewed at each election: Africa 2, Asia 1, Eastern Europe 1, Latin America (GRULAC) 3, WEOG 0. When combined with the Security Council, troop contributor, financial contributor and ECOOSC categories, this would result in the following initial overall composition:

- Africa: 7 seats
- Asia: 8 seats
- E.E.: 3 seats
- GRULAC: 4 seats
- WEOG: 9 seats

Several ECOSOC members asked to see a draft GA resolution laying out the GA distribution of seats, so that coordinated, sequential action can be taken in ECOSOC and the GA. Hachani said his goal is to adopt a resolution by April 7.

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